



“ When referencing my favorite parts of Vassar, the professors with whom I have worked are always my first point. They are immensely driven and passionate – they know their subject inside and out, and are always arriving early and leaving late. ”

– Anita Khasnavis '19

Anita Khasnavis and John Kee are both Neuroscience and Behavior majors from Vassar's Class of 2019. They're also part of a group of students, under the supervision of Assistant Professor Bojana Zupan, who are exploring Fragile X Syndrome, the largest single-gene cause of autism.

The two came to the project for different reasons. Anita was thrilled that Vassar gives undergraduates the chance to do hands-on scientific research so early on: “The opportunities greatly exceeded my expectations. Not only is the research accessible, but the professors conducting it are amazing.”

John's older brother suffers from severe cognitive deficits, due to Fragile X Syndrome. This had a profound effect on John growing up. He is now determined to pursue a career dedicated to helping improve the lives of the developmentally disabled. “I am extremely excited about bringing health and happiness into their lives.”

Vassar's Fragile X research project hopes to shed light on the genetic vs. environmental causes of autism. Though coming from divergent paths, working on the project has inspired both Anita and John to attend medical school, with the ultimate goal of pursuing careers in pediatric neurology.

**A Vassar liberal arts education produces students like Anita and John, who are taking the critical thinking skills they have learned at the College, and aiming to make a difference in the lives of others.**



“ Having students like Anita and John is profoundly rewarding to me both as an educator and a researcher. The intellectual curiosity, maturity, and productivity that Vassar helps them develop make me excited to think about the impact they'll make in 5, 10, and 20 years from now. ”

– Bojana Zupan, Assistant Professor